

HOMER HARRIS PARK PUBLIC MEETING #1 SUMMARY

AUGUST 20, 2003 GARFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER

About 35 people attended the kick-off meeting for the Friends of Homer Harris Park including neighbors, Central Area activists, members of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State, landscape design consultants from Worthy and Associates, friends of Dr. Harris, and staff from Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Parks Foundation.

Parks planner Cathy Tuttle described the process for creating a new City park

Opportunities for community building

Parks follows lead of Central Area Action Plan, including gateways, art in public places, open spaces, heritage trail.

Opportunities for community involvement and feedback

Call, email, web page, write: Cathy Tuttle Project Planner, 684-7033, cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov 800 Maynard Avenue S. #300, Seattle, WA, 98134 <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/HomerHarrisPark.htm>

Three public meetings: Vision, Design, Refine and review

1. **Kick off (August 20, 2003):** Vision. Propose your best ideas
2. **Design (October 1, 2003):** Locate your ideas and solutions
Consultant comes back with alternatives, gathers more community ideas
3. **Refine (November 12, 2003):** Review designs; finalize details of approved plan

Other opportunities for involvement

- **At a pre-construction meeting** in the spring of 2004 community can review the construction process and how will it affect neighbors and future park users.
- **Design Commission** meetings are open to the public. The Commission will review Homer Harris Park on October 2, 2003 from 9-10AM at the new City Hall. Future Commission review planned November 6.
- **Friends of Homer Harris Park** will discuss park art/history plan, fundraising and other ideas. Next meetings 8/27 and 9/17. Contact **Kari Stiles, Seattle Parks Foundation, 332-9900** kari@seattleparksfoundation.org
- **Park will open in fall of 2004 (Homer Harris day is November 13)**

Budget: \$400,000 from anonymous donation to Seattle Parks Foundation; \$100,000 from 2000 Pro Parks Levy.

Three Central Area community members gave an historical overview of the Central Area

1. **Carver Gayton, Ph.D.**, Central Area activist from a pioneer family recalled his first meeting with Dr. Harris and the central role Harris played in his life and greater Central Area community. Gayton called Harris the "best scholar-athlete ever produced from the Seattle Public Schools."
2. **Phyllis Beaumonte, President Black Heritage Society of Washington State**, presented a brief history of the Central Area. Referring to panels that will be part of a Museum of History and Industry exhibit this fall, and a Central Area timeline, Beaumonte traced the changes in the Central Area. Madison Street served as her literal and figurative metaphor for a city in transition. Beaumonte, who knew Dr. Harris, supported the new park for "this great and modest man – 'for whoever humbles himself, certainly exalts himself'."
3. **Adrienne Bailey, Director Seattle Central Community College: Community Outreach Partnership Center** reviewed how Homer Harris Park adds value to the Central Area. Bailey sees a role in the park for elders and youth, artists and neighbors. Using the Central Area Action Plan, the park can bring together pioneer families and new residents.

Steve Worthy, Landscape Architect Worthy & Associates, reviewed site constraints and opportunities.

Compact soils formed with glaciation more than 20,000 years ago. Worthy's family has lived in the area for 85 years and he and his neighbors have the experience of wet soil and many springs. This land may have wet areas. Steep drop-off to the alley, wind and rain patterns discussed. View may be obstructed and site shaded with new developments. Currently a great view and a flat ½ acre site provide good canvas for a new park. The park site diagram is on the project website.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

RECOGNIZING DR. HARRIS

- Dr. Harris was athlete. Recognize athleticism with playfields, small annual track meet for young children
- What inspired Dr. Harris? What would he want to say? Message?
- Dr. Harris planted sequoias at his house and enjoyed northwest camping, outdoors
- Art/play with scientific learning experiences. Dr. Harris was scholar and scientist
- Recognize who Dr. Harris is. This information needs to be in the park.

VALUES OF THE CENTRAL AREA

- Keys to Central Area success: know your neighbor, communication, interaction, neighborliness
- Interactive park object with rotation community responsibility and care. Events. Adopt-a-park.
- Friends of Homer Harris could evolve into a community centerpiece of commitment possible.
- Multi-generational involvement needed in the park: elements that allow people to grow with and into the park. Intergenerational projects, oral history to engage community.

DESIGN DETAILS

- Raised gazebo. Get up to view for performance.
- Picnic and gathering area
- P-patch
- Play squirting fountain like at Miller PF
- Small kids play structure (big toy?)
- Kids: restricted area for safety. Worry about toddlers dashing into street
- Don't let the park be designed solely for children. Park is for entire community.
- Sign identifying mountains in view. Views of Rainier possible?
- Drought-tolerant native vegetation where possible.
- Play on rock wall. Wall climbing. PNW type activities in park
- Informal entertainment for kids, opportunities for imagination, creativity

ART/HISTORY IDEAS: Touching wall with Central Area history

- Bronze bulldog to represent Garfield. Bulldog to climb on
- Story and history on a history wall? Maintenance and care of history area should be considered. Lots of texture in art engaging all senses.

SURROUNDING BUILDINGS AND STREETS (URBAN FABRIC)

- Concern for lost view. 35' height allowed by zoning to the east. View spots with raised ground level
- Build an alley retaining structure to stop slow erosion.
- Make sure trees don't block the view. Don't block neighbor views with landscaping
- Make sure views remain into park. Park safer if neighbors can see in.
- Parking, especially Saturday AM for YMCA is concern.

QUESTIONS

- Will this be a community park or a "destination" park?
- Homer Harris Park can't be all things for all people. What is the mission of the park?

Next meeting Wednesday, October 1, 7PM, Garfield Community Center. At this meeting the community can comment on three alternatives for the development of Homer Harris Park. Friends meetings on August 27 and Sept 17 to work on history/art plan.